

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 SY-05 SSO-00
NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 /063 W
-----161443Z 092580 /53

O 161321Z JUN 77
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3229
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: N/A
SUBJ: INCIDENT INVOLVING LENINGRAD UPI CORRESPONDENT, EMIL
SVEILIS

REF: LENINGRAD 701

1. SUMMARY: UPI LENINGRAD CORRESPONDENT EMIL SVEILIS REPORTS
THAT SEVERAL ITEMS WERE STOLEN FROM INSIDE HIS UNLOCKED
CAR AT MIDNIGHT JUNE 14-15 WHEN HE LEFT IT STANDING UNGUARDED
FOR A FEW MINUTES. ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, P&C SECRETARY
CHARLOTTE SVEILIS, AND LOCAL DISSIDENT, ILYA LEVIN, SVEILIS
REPORTED THEFT IMMEDIATELY TO POLICE, WHO QUESTIONED THE
THREE FROM ABOUT 1:00 A.M. TIL 5:20A.M. JUNE 15 AND TOLD
SVEILISES TO STAY IN THE CITY AS WITNESSES UNTIL
CULPRITS CAUGHT. END SUMMARY.

2. INCIDENT OCCURRED AS SVEILISES DRIVING LEVIN HOME AFTER
DINNER AT THEIR APARTMENT. LEVIN (AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL),
HAS JUST BEEN GIVEN PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE. ON THEIR WAY
TO LEVIN'S APARTMENT, SVEILIS STOPPED CAR IN OLD RESIDENTIAL
NEIGHBORHOOD LOCALLY FAMED AS SCENE IN DOSTOYEVSKY'S
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CRIME AND PUNISHMENT. TRIO STEPPED OUT OF CAR AND
WALKED AROUND CORNER FOR ABOUT THREE MINUTES TO LOOK
AT "HOUSE WHERE RASKOLNIKOV LIVED," LEAVING CAR
UNLOCKED. AS THEY LEFT CAR, THEY OBSERVED MILITIAMAN,
APPARENTLY ON REGULAR BEAT, WALK PAST IT ON SIDEWALK.
UPON RETURNING TO CAR, SVEILISES NOTED GLOVE COMPART-
MENT OPENED AND FOLLOWING ITEMS MISSING: TWO DETECTIVE

PAPERBACKS, ONE PAIR SUNGLASSES, SOME BACKGROUND NOTES TAKEN BY SVEILIS AND A BAG BELONGING TO LEVIN. LEVIN'S BAG CONTAINED HIS ADDRESS BOOK, THOUGH HE FEELS THERE IS LITTLE IN IT THE AUTHORITIES DO NOT ALREADY KNOW.

3. SVEILISES AND LEVIN DROVE IMMEDIATELY TO NEAREST MILITIA STATION TO REPORT THEFT. AUTHORITIES MADE THEM WAIT FOR AN HOUR OSTENSIBLY TO AWAIT OFFICIAL INTERPRETER BEFORE SERIOUS QUESTIONING BEGAN, BUT EVENTUALLY GAVE UP AND LEVIN DID ALL TRANSLATION. GROUP OF NINE OFFICIALS AND PLAINCLOTHESMEN DID, HOWEVER, GATHER IN INTERIM. AFTER ABOUT TWO HOURS OF QUESTIONING, TRIO TAKEN TO ANOTHER MILITIA STATION FOR FINGERPRINTING, WHICH AUTHORITIES SAID WAS NECESSARY TO SORT OUT PRINTS FOUND ON ANY ARTICLES SUSPECTED TO BE AMONG THOSE MISSING. SVEILIS' CAR ALSO DUSTED FOR FINGERPRINTS. THOUGH SVEILISES AND LEVIN FELT THEY HAD TOLD ALL THERE WAS TO TELL BY THIS TIME, AUTHORITIES KEPT THEM ADDITIONAL HOUR AND HALF, TILL 5:20A.M, GOING OVER WHOLE STORY IN DETAIL, BUT TAKING VERY FEW ADDITIONAL NOTES. SVEILISES NOT SURE WHETHER TO CONSIDER THIS DELIBERATE HARRASSMENT.

4. LEVIN WAS TOLD, BY PLAINCLOTHES-WOMAN WHO GAVE HER RANK AS SENIOR LIEUTENANT, THAT IF HE EXPECTED TO RECOVER NOTEBOOK HE MIGHT HAVE TO STAY PAST DEADLINE BY WHICH HE MUST LEAVE USSR. HE THEN DECLARED INTENTION NOT TO PURSUE MATTER AND WAS REPORTEDLY ASSURED HE COULD LEAVE AS PLANNED. SVEILISES ALSO TOLD THEY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD HAVE TO STAY IN LENINGRAD TILL CASE WAS RESOLVED, PRESUMABLY SO THAT THEY COULD ACT AS WITNESSES, BUT WHEN THEY ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION TO GO ON VACATION JUNE 17 FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, THEY WERE TOLD IT WOULD BE OK SO LONG AS THEY RETURNED TO LENINGRAD.

5. AUTHORITIES BRUSHED OFF ALL SUGGESTIONS THAT MILITIAMAN OBSERVED PASSING CAR SHORTLY BEFORE INCIDENT BE QUESTIONED AS TO WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE SEEN.

6. WE SEE TWO TROUBLING ASPECTS TO THIS INCIDENT: FIRST, WHETHER IT WAS PROVOCATION. WHAT MAKES INCIDENT SUSPECT IS FACT THAT LEVIN AND SVEILISES DISCUSSED THEIR INTENTION TO VISIT THIS AREA QUITE OPENLY BEFORE LEAVING SVEILIS APARTMENT. THIS CAME ON HEELS OF LONG AND RATHER UNINHIBITED DISCUSSION OF CURRENT DISSIDENT SCENE. THUS, ANYONE LISTENING WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ALERT INTERESTED AUTHORITIES TO POSSIBILITY OF MAKING "EXPLORATORY THEFT" AT FAIRLY DEFINITE TIME AND PLACE. BOTH SVEILISES

AND WE CONSIDER THIS HYPOTHESIS AS TOO TENUOUS AND
UNPROVABLE AT THIS POINT TO MERIT PROTEST.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 SY-05 SSO-00
NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
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7. SECOND QUESTION INVOLVES ADMONITION THAT SVEILISES
ARE NOT TO LEAVE LENINGRAD, AND LENGTH OF INTERROGATION.
WE WOULD NOTE ON FIRST POINT THAT IN FACT SOVIETS DO
NOT SEEM TO BE IMPOSING ANY REAL RESTRAINTS ON SVEILISES
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. WITNESS THEIR IMMEDIATE ACQUIESCENCE
WITH SVEILISES VACATION PLANS. WHAT SOVIET SEEM TO BE
SAYING, IS THAT IT WILL HELP PROSECUTION OF THE CASE IF
THE SVEILISES ARE AVAILABLE AS WITNESSES WHEN CULPRITS
ARE CAUGHT. WE WILL, OF COURSE, CLOSELY MONITOR THIS
ASPECT TO BE CERTAIN THAT NOTHING MORE THAN THIS IS IN
FACT INVOLVED.

8. RE LENGTH OF INTERROGATION, EVEN MOST MINOR TRAFFIC
ACCIDENTS INVOLVING DIPLOMATS HERE ALWAYS SEEM TO DRAG
ON FOR TWO OR THREE HOURS AND INVOLVE MULTIPLE POLICE
UNITS. UNDOUBTEDLY, LENGTHY INTERROGATION CAN BE AT
LEAST PARTIALLY ATTRIBUTED TO LACK OF URGENCY AND
CONCERN FOR INDIVIDUALS TIME AND CONVENIENCE WHICH IS
ONLY TOO TYPICAL OF SOVIET OFFICIALDOM. MOVEMENT FROM ONE
STATION TO ANOTHER ALSO COULD HAVE INVOLVED A JURISDICTIONAL
ISSUE AND AT LEAST ONE HOUR SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LOST IN
FRUITLESS SEARCH FOR INTERPRETER, UNTIL LEVIN TOOK OVER
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THE JOB HIMSELF. SOVIETS PROBABLY ALSO WOULD ANSWER ANY COMPLAINT IN THIS AREA BY POINTING TO VOLUNTARY APPEARANCE OF SVEILISES AT STATION AND RAISE THE DEFENSE THAT THEY WERE ONLY INTENT ON DOING BEST POSSIBLE JOB IN HELPING SOLVE THIS CRIME. STILL, WE BELIEVE THAT OVER FOUR HOUR INTERROGATION IN MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT IS JUST TOO LONG TO HANDLE THIS SORT OF ISSUE, AND WE INTEND TO COMPLAIN TO DIPLOMATIC AGENCY ABOUT THIS ORALLY AT OUR FIRST OPPORTUNITY.RUECKERT

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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